

[David Holm]

LM/ 1 S260 [?] [DUP?]

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St. Lincoln

DATE March 23, 1939 SUBJECT American Folklore Stuff

1. Name and address of informant David Holm, 1025 "C" St., Lincoln
2. Date and time of interview March 23, 1939-1 p.m. to 3 p.m. March 24, 1939-10 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.
3. Place of interview Private Home for the aged, 1025 "C" St.
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant None
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying None
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Reception room, barely furnished opening on stairs to second floor of private home for old folks. Rather severe and lacks warmth. House is large and kept up well but suggests the somewhat regimented life of its occupants.

Surroundings are average, residential section of medium class homes rather crowded together. Home impresses one as being "The End of the Trail" for its [derelict?] inhabitants.

FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER H. J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

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DATE March 23, 1939 SUBJECT American Folklore Stuff

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT David Holm, 1025 "C" St., Lincoln, Nebr.

1. Ancestry Swedish
2. Place and date of birth Chicago, Ill., [1894?]
3. Family Nine children (5 living) all adopted
4. Places lived with dates Chicago—1854 to 1859 Galesburg, Ill.,-1859-1867 Lincoln, Nebr.—1867 to date.
5. Education, with dates Galesburg grade school—1860 to 1867. Lincoln, Nebraska—1867 to 1870.
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates—Worker for Gov. Butler 1872 to 1876. Cattle buyer, handled Indian supplies. Standard dairy business. Hay business 1876 to 1910. Real estate & farming.
7. Special skills and interest Dairy business and milk cows.
8. Community and religious activities Methodist church.
9. Description of informant small of stature, slight build, broad features, shrewd expression. White thick hair and moustache. Ruddy
10. Other points gained in interview — complexion, slightly deaf, eager candid talker. Mr. Holm is apparently a ran of some means and evidently was a good business man. He seems different from the ordinary type of old person. Believes in the church and a good moral life, though not radical as to this.

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FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

The government brought in twelve families of colored people about 1870 and they were settled in small houses from [5th?] to 9th streets. Governor Butler owned some of these lots.

Most of those colored people were old broken down slaves and each family brought a southern blood-hound with them. These dogs were mean and they had to get rid of them. The Government furnished jobs for these negroes and paid their house rents. Out of every \$100.00 paid in rent, \$5.00 was given over for their church.

Everybody wanted these "niggers", as they called them, to do their work. I worked for Governor Butler, buying cattle from ranchers and handling Indian business. We were very sociable here in the early days and churches, lodges and schools were encouraged. They were all given free lots and money to start with. A Nazarene church was organized and held some very high spirited meetings with a deal of noise. A lot of the people didn't take very good to the Nazarene folks and thought they were a bit deranged.

Brother Howard organized the City Mission 52 years ago. Gamblers took up collections for the Mission and it was partly kept up this way for 20 years. The people were somewhat divided into classes; gamblers, church people and just people who were neither.

There used to be an old cemetery on 6th Street between "F" "G" and "H" street. When [?] was established this cemetery was abandoned. Most of the bodies were taken up and moved to Wyuka except part of the potters' field and lower classes. Some of those graves were later plowed up or dug out when 2 they graded a street through and pieces of coffins and bones were turned out.

They took them to the dump. Now and then the friends and relatives of the dead held a second service when the body was exhumed.

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One time we went out to take up a collection to build a fence around the cemetery. This was before it was moved. Billingsly, a lawyer, here at that time, said, "We don't want a fence around a cemetery. People who are in are sure going to stay there and those who are outside sure wouldn't need a fence to keep them out." He gave us \$5.00 then although we only asked for \$2.00.

When I was about 20 years old I had a common law marriage with a show woman, which lasted 4 1/2 years. There weren't many women here then and they were in demand. She was a Catholic and I was a Methodist so I couldn't marry her legally.

The priest (Father Barnica) gave us permission to live together, but I had to put up a bond that I wouldn't leave her in the lurch.

She had been with an 'Uncle Tom's cabin Show' and got to giving 'take-offs' jokes and funny parts. She told one on a doctor here. Somebody's wife took sick and they called this doctor. He came and treated her but she fell into a deep sleep and he pronounced her dead. Later she came to and said, 'I ain't dead.' And her man said, 'You keep still, your'e dead now.'

My wife bought a load of small watermelons one time at Crete and it was advertised and [?] around that a woman would sell these melons. That was quite a thing for a woman to be selling anything like that and lots of people came to Crete to see it and buy melons. They were worth about 5¢ to 10¢ but she got as high as \$1.50 for them.

Buffalo Bill Cody finally offered her \$1,000 to go to Europe with his show, but she didn't accept. Because of the difference in our religion she 3 decided after four years to leave me, which she did and went to St. Paul, Minnesota. Common law marriages were recognized by the courts in Nebraska if the parties gave some pledge of good faith.

After that I married my next to last wife who died in 1920. She had some nice jewelry part of which had been given her by the Indians. She insisted that this jewelry be buried with

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her when she died. Two gold watches, two rings and a set of silverware were put in the casket and all are out there in Wyuka. She always said that she had promised never to part from them and so she didn't. A number of people used to believe in burying some of the personal possessions with the corpse. The undertaker said we shouldn't have done it and two of the children also objected.

We never had any children of our own but raised nine whom we had taken in. I sent four of them through the University here.

Before the Bryans got into Lincoln there was'nt a democrat in town. The Republicans being in full power. One time they built another wing on the second capitol building here and the rock was dressed at the penitentiary under the Warden Stout.

He had already made a price of \$10,000.00 for this stone, but when he saw what a lot of waste there was he put in an extra bill for \$5,000. and got it. There were no democrats to object. It was customary for the Republicans to do those things, such as padding beef hills and cost of supplies. [?] Moran said that they would steal corn from a blind hog. I belonged to the Populist Party when it was organized by Governor [Holcomb?]. Nebraska was made up of a hard class of people. Of course there were lots of good pioneers moved out here to take advantage of the free or cheap land, but lots of the people came here to get away from some trouble in the east.

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It might seem that they never would amount to anything or their children but they became fine citizens in time. It was a new land and they mostly settled down to a good honest life with their troubles left behind them.

Jesse James and his band were blamed for a lot of robberies and raids around here but most of it was done by the local people.

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You've heard about the milkman putting water in the milk. Well a custom was followed which permitted adding 2 gallons of water to every 8 gallons of milk. Now I thought we hadn't ought to put water in the milk but sometimes when the Fair was on or something to bring a crowd, there was'nt enough milk to go around. As I didn't believe in putting water in the milk, I did it the other way around by just putting the milk in the water.

There was a man by the name of [Saulsberry?] came out here from Vermont. He worked some for me and one day as we drove along, a hitching strap came loose and drug under the horses feet. He saw it and said, 'say, the run strap is down.' He talked wit lots of different expressions like that and continued to use them.

I speak Swedish and Norwegian both, but the greenhorn Swedes from the old country taught me a lot of differences in the language.

Nebraska people have learned to talk according to Webster and are dropping the silly expressions which were carried in here from out of the state.

We had a [mock?] church trial once and tried the minister who was accused of kissing one of the sisters. Several of the lady members said they would 5 vote to find him guilty because none of them were the sister he had kissed.

Then the sister who was the victim of the scandalous conduct of the preacher was asked to stand up and denounce him. She stood up but didn't scold him. It was his wife.

We need some nonsense, now and then, or life gets too serious.

One time in the eighties I asked an Irish girl at Davey to go to a dance with me on Stevens Creek. Her sister didn't like the idea and tried to side track her so she could go with me. But they both went to the dance and got into a fight about it. I never liked the sister who butted in for many years after until I met her at [Ravelock?] and danced with her. At a dance there some years ago they wanted to see how many couples they could get out

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who had danced here 50 years ago. There were eight of them. In the Prize Waltzes we used to have to dance along straight lines marked off on the floor.

The girls were all afraid of becoming old maids and 'wall flowers'. Before they got married it was much better if they learned to cook as every man expected a good cook.

A lot of people around here would probably say, "Oh, that old Dave Holms' is just puttin' out some big lies." They are that way and don't even believe themselves.

I have my funeral all arranged and paid for and the announcement cards are addressed ready to go. I don't want one of those steel boxes which snap shut on you in the grave. I don't like the idea."